

I am Claude Holcomb. I am a resident of Connecticut and I am here to speak about An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients, Raised Bill No. 6645. This Bill will turn into a suicide law for doctors. If this Bill goes into law, then the Connecticut legislature will be lowering the bar for doctors to make decisions about helping people to die. I have a severe disability because of a doctor's care when I was born, coming out of my mother's womb. Instead of attending to my birth, the doctor was having a cigarette. Now if I have to go into a hospital, I wonder if I will I come out alive with my severe disability if this legislation becomes law?

It is human nature for people to read into the laws and interpret them however they want them to be implemented. How far will this law go? We've seen in history how one man killed a great number of people who were not perfect in his eyes. Are we opening the door for this to happen today?

We have to look at the whole picture of why many people in Connecticut want to kill themselves. People who have a terminal illness don't want to live with the illness. Some people cannot get the treatment they may need to slow the illness down and/or to alleviate the pain. Some people may have depression. So, if there is an opportunity for a doctor to end their life, or prescribe a drug for them to end their life, they would not have to think about their depression any more. The elderly population may think, why am I still alive? I cannot do anything for myself in this life without help. Doctors may decide to eliminate people with disabilities, as a way of protecting resources and ensuring a better use of their time.

I do not understand why some doctors believe in killing people who want to die and believe that this is the choice of the person. All people have a place in this country. This State is not poor, it can help people who are sick and are living with pain. Doctors have medications to help people live with their illnesses, and for them to continue to contribute to our society.

I am not a religious person, but I believe all people have a place in this world. People should not have to make a choice to take their own lives. It is tragic to have a law to say it is okay to have a drug to end a person's life if they feel the time is right. Some doctors do that now quietly, without a law to tell the doctor and patient what they can decide to do. Doctors prescribe morphine in dosages that will cause death, sometimes making it easy for family members when an impasse is reached. In the disabled community, we need help to live, not die.

Does the Hippocratic Oath prevent doctors from harming their patients? This legislation permits doctors to go against their own ethical code. People with disabilities cannot stand by and watch this legislation happen. You let a group from Oregon into Connecticut to tell Connecticut how its citizens should live and die. We have a doctor as a representative in our legislature and he promotes this view. He said this law to allow physician assisted suicide is just the beginning in this State. Don't let this legislation oppress our residents.

It is funny that this Bill came out at the end of the hearing process. This means there won't be an opportunity to collect enough data about the consequences of this Bill to make a sound decision. Rushing through such an important and far-reaching piece of legislation is going to end lives.